California Regional Water Quality Control Board
Central Valley Region
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Arnold Schwarzenegger
Governor

SENT VIA EMAIL
3 September 2010

To: Stakeholders in the Lower American River Watershed and Other Interested Parties

LOWER AMERICAN RIVER AND LAKE NATOMA MERCURY CONTROL PROGRAM AND TMDL DEVELOPMENT – DISCUSSION MATERIALS FOR THE STAKEHOLDER MEETING ON 16 SEPTEMBER 2010

All interested parties are invited to attend the upcoming stakeholder meeting regarding the development of a mercury control program for the Lower American River and Lake Natoma scheduled as follows:

Date: **Thursday, 16 September 2010**
Time: 10 a.m. to 12 p.m.
Location: Central Valley Water Board office in Rancho Cordova

Central Valley Water Board staff is developing a Basin Plan amendment (BPA) to the Water Quality Control Plan for the Sacramento River and San Joaquin River Basins that must meet Clean Water Act requirements for a Total Maximum Daily Load (TMDL) and Porter Cologne Water Quality Act requirements for an implementation program to control mercury in the lower American River and Lake Natoma. This mercury control program would have new legal requirements for entities named in the BPA.

At previous stakeholder meetings, staff provided background information on mercury, the extent of mercury impairment in the lower American River and Lake Natoma, a preliminary source analysis summary for the watershed, and alternatives for numeric targets to protect wildlife and humans who consume fish from the lower American River and Lake Natoma. This information is available on the Central Valley Water Board website: http://www.waterboards.ca.gov/centralvalley/water_issues/tmdl/central_valley_projects/american_river_hg/index.shtml.

The September 16th meeting will include a discussion of implementation ideas for a mercury control program. The draft TMDL and BPA for the control program will include:
- New fish tissue objectives for the lower American River and Lake Natoma, and the addition of the commercial and sport fishing (COMM) beneficial use designation for these waters;
- TMDL elements required by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, including load and waste load allocations for sources and a margin of safety;
- Implementation program to achieve the fish tissue objectives, including milestones and schedules; and
- Surveillance and monitoring program.

California Environmental Protection Agency

♻ *Recycled Paper*

The attached straw proposal outlines the TMDL elements and provides preliminary ideas for the implementation program. It is being provided now so that you have a chance to review it before the meeting. During the meeting, we will be seeking input from stakeholders on these and other ideas and alternatives for the control program.

After the September 16th meeting, staff will have additional meetings and continue to seek input on specifics of the draft Basin Plan amendment text. All feedback will be made available so that other stakeholders can review each other's comments and suggest BPA text in an iterative process to address remaining concerns where possible. A similar process was used to develop the Delta methylmercury control program.

During the development of the Delta methylmercury TMDL, stakeholders created a set of Guiding Principles (attached) that were often referred to when developing the Basin Plan amendment text. These Guiding Principles may be applicable for all the upstream mercury TMDLs we are developing. As we develop the lower American River and Lake Natoma TMDLs, we expect to continue referring to these principles.

We look forward to a productive meeting on September 16th. Please contact Stephen Louie (sjloiue@waterboards.ca.gov, 916 464-4627) or Patrick Morris (pmorris@waterboards.ca.gov, 916 464-4621) if you have any questions about this project.

Patrick Morris
Senior Water Resources Control Engineer
Mercury TMDL Unit

Attachments: LAR Mercury Straw Proposal
                       Delta MeHg TMDL Guiding Principles